

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-7, 11-13, and 16-17 remain pending in the application, of which, after amendment, claim 1 remains the sole independent claim.

All pending stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over de Macario in view, variously, of Davis, Modlin and Stylli.

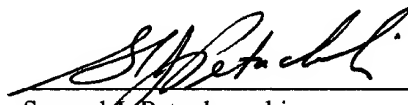
Independent claim 1 has been amended to overcome this rejection by clarifying that the platen provided is capable of retaining *distinct* samples in through-holes at the specified areal density. This feature is not taught or suggested by any of the cited references, alone, or in combination, since Davis is not concerned with distinct samples and Stylli does not address through-hole geometries.

Claim 16 has been amended to depend from claim 1, such that all remaining claims contain the patentable features of claim 1. The claims not so depending are canceled without prejudice to further prosecution. Claim 17 has been amended for grammatical consistency.

Applicant's representatives thank Examiners Soderquist and Warden for their careful consideration of the issues presented.

Examination and allowance of the claims as amended is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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